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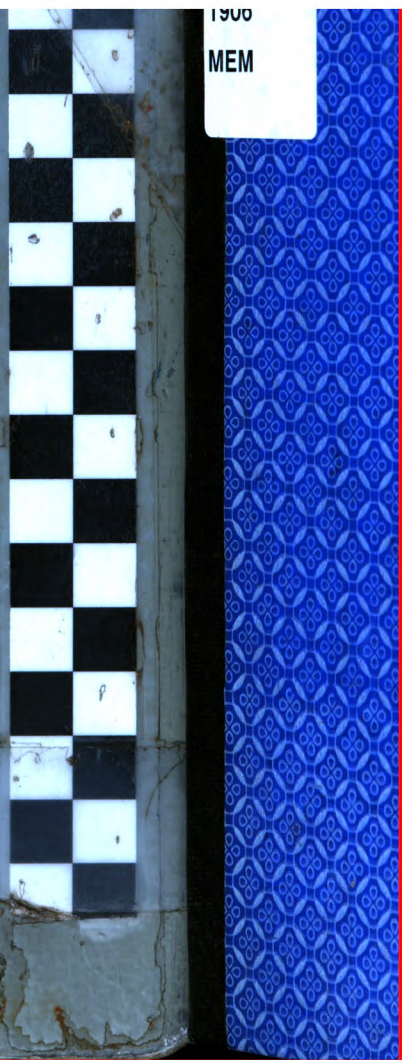
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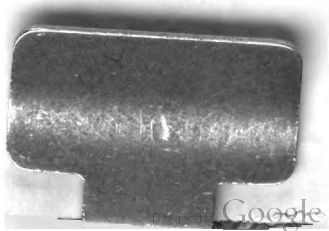




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A SKETCH
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IN THE
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CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN OF THE BAIS RAJPUT CLAN.

King Salibahan—Mythology—Legends—Traditions.

THE hoary annals of ancient India contain no greater name than King Salibahan who flourished in the first century of the Christian era. and was the common ancestor of the different branches of the Bais Rajput clan that had played a prominent part in the political affairs of the Province of Oudh for a period of six hundred years. King Salibahan defeated the renowned King Vikramaditya of Ujjain, and having expelled him from Mungiratan on the Nerbuda in the Deccan, became the undisputed monarch of all India and fixed his own era in A.D. 55. It has been conjectured by European savants, to whom we owe much of our knowledge concerning the history of ancient India, that Salibahan was the leader of a successful Scythian invasion and the founder of a Scythian (Sanskrit Shak or Taksak) dynasty in India.

According to a tradition, which is current in the family of the Rana of Khajurgaon, the chief of the Sehbas or Sehbas clan of Bais Rajputs, Salibahan's father was the great sage, Sudhi Brohmo Rishi, and his mother a

daughter of Basuki Nag Raj, the Great Serpent God, who, according to Hindu mythology, supports this planet on his head. Another tradition, which is referred to by Mr. Bennett in his "Report on the Family History of the Chief Clans of the Rai Bareli District," says that Salibahan was brought up under the roof of a potter at Mungi Patan and in his childhood showed such extraordinary talents as prognosticated his future greatness. He appears to have had a genius for deciding complicated disputes, and, as a cross-examiner, his skill was simply superhuman. In his childhood, he delighted in amusing himself with clay figures of horses, elephants and soldiers in battle array, and before he had well reached manhood, he led his clay battalions against the army of Vikramaditya. When the contending hosts met, the clay figures were transformed into "living brass" and the weapons of the troops of Vikramaditya fell harmless on that hard metal. Vikramaditya fled from the battle-field, hotly pursued by his victorious enemy, and was glad to take refuge in a temple of Siva. But at the bidding of Salibahan, the massive gates of the temple rolled back and Vikram was obliged to acknowledge his conqueror with appropriate homage. An amicable arrangement was made on the spot for the division of the royal power; and on the death of Vikram, Salibahan became the Emperor of all India. He lived to conquer the Punjab and died at Sialkote.

Salibahan is known as the founder of the Serpent or Takshak dynasty, and this tradition, coupled with the fact that the Serpent God is to this day the tribal deity of the Bais Rajput clan, would seem to lend some

colour of truth to the theory of his Scythian origin. Mr. H. R. Nevill, I.C.S., in his admirable *Gazetteer* of the Rai Bareli District, points out that this theory of Scythian origin is somewhat inconsistent with the fact that "the Bais themselves claim to be of the Surajbansi stock." Mr. Nevill has been misinformed on this point, as the Bais do not claim to be either of the Surajbansi or the Chandrabansi stock—the two highest clans of Rajputs—though their status is acknowledged by all Rajputs to be sufficiently high and both the Surajbansi and the Chandrabansi Rajputs give their daughters in marriage to Bais youths. Moreover, it is an admitted historical fact, as Lieutenant-Colonel James Todd points out in his "Annals and Antiquities of Rajsthan," that many of the Rajput clans are of Scythian origin. Another link in the chain of evidence supporting the theory of the descent of the Bais Rajputs from Salibahan, the descendant of the Serpent God, is furnished by the prevalence of a belief among the Bais, that no snake has ever destroyed, or can destroy, any of them. Sir William Sleeman in his interesting work, entitled—"A Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh in 1849-50," says that the Bais "seem to take no precautions" against snake-bite, and that "if bitten by a snake, they do not attempt any remedy."



CHAPTER II

ABHAICHAND.

An Epoch-making Pilgrimage—Rajput Chivalry—Pioneer of Rajput Immigration into Oudh—Wars with Aborigines.

FOR nearly twelve centuries, the descendants of Salibahan lived in regal splendour at Mungi Patan on the Nerbuda in the Deccan and we do not hear anything of them until the middle of the thirteenth century. The greater portion of the Province of Oudh was conquered by the Mahomedans in the last decade of the twelfth century by Bucktiar Khiliji, the famous General of Saha-buddin or Mahomed Ghori. About half a century later, the King of Argul (Fatehpur), who was a Goutam Rajput by caste, refused to pay tribute to the Mahomedan Emperor of Delhi and managed to defeat a strong force which the Mahomedan Governor of Oudh had sent against him. Sir Charles Elliott, in his "Chronicles of Unao," says that the Emperor of Delhi referred to was one of the Lodi dynasty. This is clearly an error, as Nasiruddin Mahomed of the Slave dynasty occupied the throne of Delhi in the middle of the thirteenth century and the reign of the Lodi Dynasty had not begun until the middle of the fifteenth century. Well, the Mahomedan Governor of Oudh, smarting under the humiliation of his defeat, resolved to have his revenge anyhow. Hearing through his spies that the Rani of Argul, accompanied by her daughter, was about to proceed to Baksar, (the southernmost village in the Unao District) to bathe in the Ganges

on the festival of the new moon and that her escort was not likely to be a strong and numerous one, the Governor sent a large number of troops to waylay the royal ladies and to bring them to him as captives. The escort of the Rani, being taken by surprise, took to their heels and both she and her daughter were about to be taken prisoners by the victorious Mahomedans, when she lifted the covering of her litter and cried out,—“Is there no Rajput here who can rescue me and my daughter and save our honour?” Her piteous appeal fortunately reached the ears of two Princes who were descendants of Salibahan and had arrived there from Mungi Patan with a large retinue for the same religious purpose which had brought there the Queen of Argul and her daughter. They were brothers and both were as chivalrous as they were strong and brave. They fell upon the Mahomedans and drove them off and had the satisfaction of rescuing the Queen and the Princess. Both the brothers were, however, wounded and one of them died on the battle-field. The other, named Abhaichand, fortunately recovered and had the honour of escorting the ladies to the palace of the King of Argul. The Raja, in gratitude and admiration for the heroism displayed by Abhaichand, not only gave his daughter in marriage to him but also gave with her as dowry all the lands on the north of the Ganges over which he held his sway.

The regions, comprised in this dowry, were inhabited by the aboriginal Bhars whom the Raja of Argul had found to be very refractory and troublesome subjects, so that the acquisition was one of rather dubious advantage to his son-in-law. According to Gautam Rajputs, the territory given

to Abhaichand comprised one thousand four hundred and forty villages, but this claim of extraordinary generosity is not supported by the traditions of the Bais themselves.

Abhaichand lost no time in taking possession of his newly acquired possessions, but the subjugation of the aboriginal Bhars taxed his energies and resources to the utmost. The disappearance of the Bhars has been a subject of much speculation among historians, but traces of their extinct civilization and the ruins of their strongholds and fortresses are still extant. Their oldest abode was the District of Bahraich, the name of which is supposed to have been derived from them; and in the Rai Bareli District, the Ahirs are said to be their modern representatives. Abhaichand inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Bhars at Baksar and built a fort there. This village was the first seat of the Bais Rajput clan in Oudh. Its original name appears to have been Bakashram or the Retreat of Baka who is said to have been a demon who was slain by Abhaichand. The turbulent Bhars appear to have given their conqueror little rest, and sometimes they even proved more than a match for him and compelled him to evacuate his fort at Baksar and retire to his stronghold at Abhaipur, a village which he had founded in the Antarbhad and where his death appears to have taken place. Abhaichand may be said to have been the pioneer of Rajput immigration into Oudh, as a number of Rajput families from Mungi Patan and other places came over to Oudh with him and settled there.

CHAPTER III.

ABHAICHAND'S SUCCESSORS.

Conquest—Consolidation—Defeat and Exile— Return of Prosperity.

ABHAICHAND'S successor, Karan Rai, was a chip of the old block. He prosecuted with vigour and success the enterprise which had been left unfinished by his predecessor. He recovered Baksar from the Bhars, but the first real success was achieved by his grandson, Sidhu Rai, who utterly routed the Bhars in a great battle fought at Sangrampur, so named to commemorate his victory. Pushing on through the wooden ravines and driving his enemy before him, he took possession of Murar Mau and Dhundia Khera and was the first to establish his clan in sufficiently large numbers in the new country. He was the founder of Sidhupur and consolidated the conquests made by his predecessors. His successors continued to extend their possessions, and Rai Tos, fifth in descent from Sidhu Rai, was the undisputed lord of the seven Parganas of Unchgaon, Sidhupur, Bāra, Kumbhi, Ghatampur, Magrayar, Pinhan and half of Bhagwantnagar, all at present in the District of Unao.

Then followed a Mahomedan invasion and Rai Tos was defeated and deprived of his possessions and we next find him with his family and retainers living under the protection of the Chauhan Raja of Mainpuri. He appears to have had a dispute with the Raja who had ridiculed the pretensions of the Bais and refused their chief the

honours paid to an equal. On this, he was challenged by Rai Tos to a pitched battle. On the morning of the fight, all the Bais youths, below twenty years of age, numbering about five hundred, were directed to return to their homes, so that in the event of the defeat of their elders, their families would be preserved from extinction. With apparent compliance and "a happy compromise between prudence and valour, they withdrew to an eminence at such a distance from the engagement, that they would be able to participate in the success or get a good start in case of the defeat of their relations. They watched an indecisive conflict from morning till evening, and then taking advantage of the fatigue of both parties, swooped down on the Chauhans and secured the victory." No argument could be more conclusive than this of the worth of the Bais Rajputs, and the Chauhan Raja was glad to propitiate Rai Tos by investing him with the Raja's *tilok* or the mark of royalty and giving him his daughter in marriage. Rai Tos entered the service of the Emperor of Delhi and achieved much distinction and renown by his bravery. He died while leading the Imperial troops against some rebellious chieftain.

CHAPTER IV.

RAJA'SATHNA.

Victory over Mahomedans—Defeat and Death—Birth of Tilokchand.

RAJA'SATHNA, son of Rai Tos, was as able and brave as he was ambitious. He not only recovered by conquest

his ancestral dominions, but added to them the territory of Khiron which he conquered from the Bhars. He then pushed his conquests to the north, extending them almost to Lucknow. Taking advantage of the unsettled state of Jaunpur, he seized the old Mussulman stronghold of Kakori and his success caused a temporary extinction of the power of the Mahomedans who were driven out of the country from Safipur and Kakori to Manikpur, and in most cases were even expelled from their old fortified towns or *qasbas*. Throughout the newly conquered territory, the *Azan* and the slaughter of kine were proscribed by order of Raja Sathna, and as his success caused a general rising of Hindus against the Mahomedan colonists, in most of the larger towns the Mahomedan Judges and Tax-Collectors were murdered or driven away. Husain Shah, on his accession to the throne of Jaunpur, sent a strong force to chastise the Hindus and retrieve his losses. Raja Sathna offered him a stout resistance but was besieged in his fort at Kakori which the Mahomedan invaders stormed. It is not clear whether the fort was taken by force or fraud, but the Raja was killed, and according to some accounts, his head was buried where the Shekhon Durwaza now stands at Lucknow. One of his descendants had taken an oath to recover the head of his great ancestor, but his oath remained unfulfilled.

Fortunately the Rani escaped, and in the course of her flight was delivered of a son at the small village of Kotbhar on the confines of the Rai Bareilly and Unao Districts. This posthumous son became famous as

Tilokchand, "the eponymous hero of the greatest of the Bais Clans." The Rani was hospitably received by the Chauhan Raja of Mainpuri and her son passed the first twenty years of his life at this refuge which had also sheltered his grand-father before him.

CHAPTER V.

TILOKCHAND.

Conquests—A Caste-maker—Anecdotes.

TILOKCHAND is far and away the greatest name in Bais annals. His heroism and conquests have furnished themes alike to the historian and the bard. In 1478 Buhlol Lodi, Emperor of Delhi, sent an expedition against King Hosen Shah of Jaunpur who had rebelled against his authority. Hosen Shah was defeated by the Imperial troops and sought safety in flight. Taking advantage of the destruction of the Jaunpore kingdom, Tilokchand sallied forth from Mainpuri at the head of a large body of Rajputs, intent on thoughts of conquest. Crossing the Ganges near Baksar, he marched northward and utterly defeated the Mahomedan garrison at Kakori. He next invaded Malliabad, but the Pathans of that place, who had only recently settled there, proved too strong for him and fixed the boundary between their territories and his by burying charcoal in a spot which is now covered by the Sheikhon Darwaza at Lucknow. He had however little difficulty in asserting his supremacy over the whole of eastern Oudh from the Ghagra to the Ganges and from the gates of Lucknow to Pertabgarh.

Tilokchand was a born ruler of men. He built a series of forts at Khiron, Sangrampur and Rai Bareli. He was the undisputed ruler of the 22 Bais Parganas. He was unquestionably the Premier Raja of Oudh in his day.

Various stories are related with pride by his descendants of the supernatural powers of our hero. If he was not a king-maker, he was certainly a caste-maker. When he suffered his first and only defeat at the hands of the Malliabad Pathans, a panic seized his troops who fled, leaving him wounded and lying in a litter. The victorious Mahomedans came to seize his person and to carry him away in captivity. But the bearers of the litter, who were hereditary servants of the house, stood bravely by him, and beating off his pursuers, carried him away in safety. He then assembled his followers and in their presence said that on that day of defeat and peril, his Rajputs behaved like women and his *Kahars* (palki-bearers) showed the bravery of Rajputs. He was therefore pleased to change their name from Mehra to Mahrar and to confer upon them the social status of Rajputs. Since that day the Mahrars have ranked as Rajputs. The Raja also gave them twelve villages in Perganna Hurha. The Rawuts of Unao claim to be the descendants of the "fifth son" (a Rajput euphemism for a bastard) of Raja Tilokchand.

Another extraordinary story, related of Tilokchand, is the following:—One day while he was out hunting, he felt very thirsty and seeing a man drinking by a pond

under a mango tree, went up to him and without a word took his *lota* from his hands and drank. After having appeased his thirst, he asked the man what caste he belonged to. In reply the man said,—“Maharaj, I am a Lodh.” “No,”—replied the Maharaja,—“You are mistaken. You are not a Lodh but an *Amtara Pathuk*, a Brahmin.” The descendants of this Lodh rank as Brahmins to this day. The Ahir Bhale Sultans also ascribe their elevation to Raja Tilokchand.

The bards of Tilokchand and of the Chauhan Raja of Mainpuri one day entered into a friendly contest in singing the praises of their respective patrons, each claiming the highest rank for his. The dispute ran so high that eventually the Rajas themselves took part in it and it was at last resolved to decide by single combat which was entitled to the homage of the other. Tilokchand came off victorious and the Chauhan Raja not only acknowledged the superiority of the Bais chief but gave his daughter in marriage to him.

Like King Solomon, Tilokchand appears to have been a much-married man. The Brahmins of Sultanpur relate that the number of his wives had reached the figure of three hundred and included high caste Rajput Princesses like those of Mainpuri and Rewah as well as dames who were not so high born, and that he became the father of a progeny as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore. His descendants are known as Tilokchandi Bais and by them his memory is held in the highest veneration. To this day the Bais horseman descends

from his horse and goes bare-footed as he passes by the village where was born nearly five centuries ago the most illustrious chief of the Bais Rajput clan. Tilokchand had carved out a kingdom for himself, which, he fondly believed, would hurl back in course of time the tide of Mahomedan conquest. But on his death the structure, he had so laboriously erected, fell to pieces.

CHAPTER VI.

TILOKCHAND'S SUCCESSORS.

WHEN Tilokchand died, his eldest son, Harhar Deo, happened to be away at Delhi. During his absence, his younger brother, Prithichand, had been raised to the *gaddi*, but on his return from Delhi he was declared the rightful successor and he not only secured for himself the title of Rana but also the greater portion of his ancestral dominions. He founded the village of Khajurgaon, the seat of the present Rana Shew Raj Singh Bahadur, but also resided at Sehbasī or Simbasī, and hence the branch, of which the Rana of Khajurgaon is the head, is known as the Sehbasī or Simbasī branch. Harhar Deo was a powerful ruler and during his time the prestige of the family remained untarnished. Harhar Deo was succeeded by his son Ramchandra, and the latter was succeeded by his son Khera Karan who in his turn was succeeded by Sakt Singh who enhanced the prestige of his family by annexing the Dalmau Perganna after having defeated the powerful Mussulman Zemindars of that place.

Sakht Singh was succeeded by his eldest son, Rana Doman Deo, who fully maintained the high position of his house. He had his head-quarters at the fort of Chilohi. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Rana Ajit Singh, who was in his turn succeeded by his eldest son, Rana Kharag Singh. Amar Singh, the eldest son of the latter, was the next Rana of Khajurgaon. He appears to have been a most ambitious man, and like most ambitious men, had to pass through various vicissitudes of fortune. At one time we see him at the head of a victorious legion, as when he defeated Udat Singh of Dhundia Khera and Achal Singh of Purera. At another time we find him deserted by his ally and defeated by the Purera chieftain. Finally, his cup of humiliation became full to the brim when the Sehbasis were defeated at Dalmau by Chabili Ram, a crafty official at Allahabad, who had proclaimed himself independent and forcibly taken possession of a portion of the territories owned by the Rana of Khajurgaon. This took place in the first decade of the eighteenth century and marked the commencement of the dark period in the fortunes of the house of Khajurgaon—which, however, turned out to be a singularly short one, having regard to the fact that the family had enjoyed almost unbroken prosperity for a succession of centuries. Amar Singh failed to recover possession of his lost domains and died of disappointment. He was succeeded by his only son, Sangram Singh, who in his turn was succeeded by his only son, Pahar Singh. In 1730, Pahar Singh was admitted to engage for Khajurgaon, Sareli, Bajpaur and Hajipur and assumed the title of Rana and the

Chiefship of his clan levies. He was involved in constant disputes with the rival house of Dhoondia Khera and was once besieged in his fort at Khajurgaon which he was eventually forced to evacuate. After him, the Ranship of Khajurgaon passed in succession to Chain Singh, Bodh Singh and Aman Singh. Their careers were not altogether uneventful as they were constantly at feud with their own relations or in arms against the Nawabi Government. Each of them contrived to make some additions to the ancestral domains, so that we find Rana Raghu Nath Singh, the successor of Rana Aman Singh, holding his head as high as any of the "Barons bold" of Oudh in the middle of the last century.

CHAPTER VII.

RANA RAGHU NATH SINGH.

More Acquisitions—The Mutiny.

RANA RAGHUNATH SINGH appears to have been a striking personality of his time and typical of the age in which he lived. When Sir William Sleeman was touring in the interior of Oudh in 1849-50, Beni Madho, the proprietor of Sankarpur, who subsequently became a prominent rebel leader in the Mutiny of 1857, told him that during the five years that Fakir Mahommed Khan was Nazim of the district, a quarrel had subsisted between Beni Madho and his kinsman, Rana Raghu-nath Singh of Khajurgaon, that Sahib Rai, the Deputy of Fakir Mahommed who was himself no man of business, had espoused the cause of the Rana of Khajurgaon

and had persuaded his master, the Nazim, to "attack and rob him (Beni Madho) of all he had, turn him out of his estate and to make it over to Raghunath Singh." That, on being dispossessed of his estate, he proceeded to Lucknow and fought his claims there for fourteen months and finally succeeded in obtaining an order from the Minister Amin Ud-dowla for the estate being restored to him, and that, fortified with this order, he recovered possession of his estate. Now Beni Madho was an implacable foe of his cousin Rana Raghunath Singh. For ten years a battle-royal raged between them for the possession of exclusive right to the title of Rana and each had a force of five thousand brave soldiers with numerous auxiliaries. This contest terminated in a compromise whereby both competitors were acknowledged to have established their claim to the title and were permitted to retain it. Under the circumstances, the reliability of the statements, made by Beni Madho to Sir William Sleeman, reflecting upon the character of Rana Raghunath Singh, appears to be extremely problematical. We dare say, if the latter had been given the opportunity, he could have put an entirely different complexion upon the circumstances under which Beni Madho was deprived of his estate and it was made over to him.

Mr. Benett, in his "Report on the Family History of the Chief Clans of the Rai-Pargeli District," records the following incident:—

"In 1843, Haider Hearsey on his way to Partabgarh had left a small detachment at Bhitargaw. The Rana

(Raghunath Singh) considered this an unwarrantable interference and burnt the station down. Hearsey was furiously angry at hearing of this sort of impertinence, and was not appeased by the ill-success of the artillery he sent to chastise the aggressor. He soon arrived in person, and defeating the Rana before his new fort at Hajipur, drove him into the old stronghold of Khajurgaon. Here the besiegers were worthily resisted, and their commander himself pointed the gun which he had slung in the branch of a tree overlooking the fortress. Eventually Raghunath Singh escaped to the dense jungles of Nain and returned to the enjoyment of his estates when the danger had passed. He lived to engage under the English the largest estate in Baiswara."

Sleeman however gives an entirely different account of Rana Raghunath Singh's engagement with Hearsey, which is reproduced here:—

"Gorbaksh Sing Simbansee died some twenty years ago, leaving an estate reduced from a greater number to ninety-three villages. His nephew, Fateh Bahadur, a child, was adopted by his widow who continued to manage the whole till she died four years after. The heir was still a boy, and Raghunath Singh of Khajurgaon, the head of the Simbansee family, took advantage of his youth, seized upon the whole ninety-three villages, and turned him out to beg subsistence among his relatives. In this, he, Raghunath Singh, was, as usual, acting in collusion with the local authorities of the Government. He continued to possess the

estate for ten years, but to reside in his fort of Hajipur. Koelee Singh, a Guhlote by caste, and a Zemindar of Bheeturgaw and its eight dependent villages, which formed part of the estate of Fateh Bahadur, went to Court at Lucknow and represented that Raghunath Singh had no right whatever to the lands he held and the Court had better make them over to him and the other Zemindars, if they did not like to restore them to their rightful owner. Bheeturgaw and its dependent eight villages were made over to him, and ten Sipahs from Captain Hyder Hearsey's regiment were sent to establish and support him in possession. Raghunath attacked them, killed two of the Sipahs and drove out Koelee Singh. He repaired to Court, and Mahomed Khan was sent out as Special Commissioner with orders to punish Raghunath Singh. He and Captain Hearsey attacked him in his fort of Hajipur, drove him out and restored Fateh Bahadur to twenty-four villages, and re-established Koelee Singh in Bheeturgaw and the eight villages dependent upon it."

We are afraid, it is impossible to ascertain, at this distance of time, which of the two accounts quoted above is correct.

When the Mutiny cloud burst, there was no Province of India where the tide of treason rose higher than it did in the Province of Oudh. The annexation of the Province to British dominions in 1856, or rather the summary Settlement which followed, had resulted in many of the powerful Taluqdars being deprived

of some of their ancestral villages to which their claims were held to be of doubtful validity. Mr. Forrest, in his "History of the Indian Mutiny," quoting from the MS. Diary of Sir Joseph Fayrer, *Bart.*, recalls the death-bed utterances of Sir Henry Lawrence. "He spoke of the injudicious method in which native landholders had been dealt with by the Government." Mr. S. H. Butler, I.C.S., C.I.E., than whom Oudh has known no more devoted or sympathetic officer, in his admirable *brochure*, entitled "Oudh Policy," which has won for him the gratitude of the entire body of Taluqdars, says that, as the result of the summary Settlement, no fewer than nine thousand, nine hundred and three villages were transferred from Taluqdars to village proprietors. The Taluqdars, with a few honourable exceptions, foremost among whom was Maharaja Sir Digbijoy Singh Bahadur, K.C.S.I., of Bulrampur, went over in a body to the rebel camp, at the head of their armed retainers. Rana Raghunath Singh saw his powerful kinsmen, Ram Buksh of Dhundia-Khera and Beni Madho of Shankarpur, exerting themselves openly and actively for the success of the rebel cause and fighting pitched battles with British troops. Maharaja Sir Man Singh, K.C.S.I., (then Raja Man Singh) —the ablest Taluqdar of his day, who was as intrepid on the battle-field as he was sagacious in the cabinet, had lent the weight of his prestige and influence to the rebels and become one of their most active leaders. The heads of the two powerful Mahomedan houses of Jahan-girabad and Mahmudabad had been among the first to raise the standard of revolt.

Small blame, then, to the aged Rana Raghunath Singh, if, under the circumstances, he should have been carried away by the irresistible force and fury of the current which had overwhelmed all around him. It is on record that he had at first joined the rebel cause, but the fact that his name does not appear in any of the chronicles of the Mutiny in Oudh, which we have yet come across, and is not even mentioned in his work by General Sir Hope Grant, who commanded the British forces, despatched to suppress the rebellion and hunt out the rebel leaders in the Rai Bareli District, would seem to point to the inference that Rana Raghunath Singh had not played a prominent part as a rebel leader and that he had at best been but a fifth-wheel to the rebel coach. He appears to have deserted the rebel cause and transferred his allegiance to the English at an early stage of the insurrection. We find from official records that while the rebellion was at its height, he tendered the payment of Rupees twenty thousand as revenue and rendered the most loyal and effective assistance to the English in preparing and guarding the bridge at Bhitauraghat. In reward of his loyalty, the Government granted him a number of villages confiscated from rebel leaders. Rana Raghunath Singh died in 1861, and as his son, Jadunath Singh, had died fifteen years before, he was succeeded by his grandson, Rana Shankar Baksh Singh Bahadur—afterward Rana Sir Shankar Baksh Singh Bahadur, K.C.I.E.

CHAPTER VIII.

RANA SIR SHANKAR BAKSH SINGH, BAHADUR, K.C.I.E.

Famine Services—British Indian Association—Member, Imperial Legislative Council—Oudh Rent Act—Knighthood—Colvin Taluqdars' School—Social Reform—Relations with High Officials.

RANA SHANKAR BAKSH SINGH was born on the 27th of December 1839 and was therefore twenty-two years of age when he succeeded his grand-father to the Ranaship of Khajurgaon. The Province of Oudh has known few Taluqdars so pre-eminently distinguished for loyalty, philanthropy and a deep-rooted love of justice, as was the nobleman whose name has furnished the heading to this Chapter. He was one of the six Taluqdars of Oudh, who received medals of honour at the Imperial Assemblage held at Delhi in 1877 in connection with the Proclamation of the late Queen Victoria as Empress of India. In the same year the title of Rana, which had been borne by the Taluqdar of Khajurgaon, as chief of the Simbansee clan of Bais Rajputs, for an unbroken succession of centuries and had been recognized by the Kings of Oudh, was confirmed by the British Government and made hereditary in his family.

The public life of ~~Rana~~ Shankar Baksh Singh began with his appointment, in November 1877, as Vice-President of the British Indian Association of Lucknow—the great organization of the Taluqdars of Oudh. His tenure of this honorary office, which made him the brain

as well as the arm of the Association, was signalized by the introduction of various reforms, calculated to enhance the utility and the popularity of the Association and to improve its financial position. He found that the meetings of the Association had become few and far between as the visits of Angels. At his instance, the rules and procedure of the Association were amended in order to provide for the holding of meetings with greater regularity in the future. He found that owing to apparent laxity in collection, the subscriptions, due to the Association, had, in the cases of not a few Taluqdars, remained unrealized for several years. He adopted effective but tactful measures by which he not only succeeded in realizing the arrears but also improved the collection of the current demand. He found that a large sum of money belonging to the Association was lying idle in the Government Treasuries. He put an end to this practice and made a substantial addition to the permanent income of the Association by investing the money in Government Securities valued at Rupees seventy-six thousand. He was specially thanked by the Association for improving its financial position.

Nor was the Rana Sahab less active in his efforts to secure the redress of some of the more pressing grievances of the Taluqdars. He found that the provisions of section 158 of the Revenue Act of 1876 were not being properly followed by District Officers, with the result that great difficulty was experienced by the Taluqdars in realizing money from subordinate tenants. He represented the matter to Government and had the satisfaction of obtaining

prompt redress, as Government issued orders to District Officers to give effect to the provisions of the Revenue Act, which had almost become a dead letter. Imperial questions also claimed a fair share of his attention. When Lord Lytton declared war against Afghanistan, the British Indian Association submitted, at his instance, a representation to Government, in the name of the Taluqdars, offering to place their personal services and resources at the disposal of Government. The offer was thankfully acknowledged by Government. When the dreadful famine of 1878 devastated the United Provinces, Rana Shankar Baksh was among the first and foremost to unloose his purse-strings for the relief of the sufferers. He was one of the few territorial magnates of the old school, who realized the truth that a great position carries with it great responsibilities, and, in his own case, strove to discharge them to the best of his ability and according to his light. In recognition of his famine services, he was awarded a Certificate of Honour at a Durbar held on the 13th of November 1878.

The estates of some of the Taluqdars having been sold privately or by Government, Rana Shankar Baksh suggested that Government should be requested to pass a Regulation providing that a certain percentage of the incomes of those estates should be reserved for the children of the Taluqdars. He drafted a Regulation to this effect and it was submitted to Government. Though he did not live to see his suggestion carried out, it may not be out of place to point out here that a similar provision has found a place in Act II of 1900. We next find the Association submitting, at the instance of the Rana Saheb

a representation to Government regarding the Patwari Act of 1882 which made encroachments upon the rights of Taluqdars.

In 1882 Rana Shankar Baksh was created, in recognition of his public services, a Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire. The Sanad conferring this title upon him is published below :—

VICTORIA REGINA.

Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, Empress of India and Sovereign of the Order of the Indian Empire, to Rana Shankar Baksh Singh Bahadur, Honorary Assistant Commissioner in Oudh, Greeting : Whereas, We have thought fit to nominate and appoint you to be a Member of our said Order of the Indian Empire, We do by these Presents grant unto you the dignity of a Companion of our said Order, and hereby authorise you to have, hold, and enjoy the said dignity and rank as a Companion of our said Order, together with all and singular the privileges thereunto belonging or appertaining.

Given at our Court at Balmoral under our Sign Manual and the Seal of our said Order, this twenty-third day of May 1882, in the forty-fifth year of our Reign.

By Her Majesty's Command.

HARTINGTON.

In the year 1886 Rana Shankar Baksh was appointed an Additional Member of the Legislative Council of His



Rana Sir Shri

Singh Bahadur, K.C.I.E.

Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General to represent the Taluqdars of Oudh in the discussion of the Oudh Rent Bill which had just been introduced by the late Mr. Quinton whose tragic death at Manipur robbed the Civil Service of one of its most brilliant ornaments. The Rana took his seat at Simla, and at the meeting of the Supreme Legislative Council, held there on the 9th of June, 1886, the Hon'ble Mr. Quinton in moving that the Hon'ble Rana Shankar Baksh be added to the Select Committee on the Oudh Rent Bill, welcomed the Rana to the Council in the following terms:—

“The Legislative Council has been reinforced by the addition of Rana Shankar Baksh Singh, Vice-President of the Taluqdars' Association and owner of a large taluq in southern Oudh, whose knowledge and experience will, I have no doubt, be of great value to us in carrying the Bill through its remaining stages.”

His Excellency the Viceroy (the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava) said:—

“A very well-qualified representative of the Taluqdars, the Vice-President of their Association, has been appointed to assist us by his advice.”

At this meeting of the Legislative Council, Rana Shankar Baksh Singh delivered a most able and exhaustive speech criticising the Oudh Rent Bill from the stand-point of the Taluqdars who were so vitally affected by that measure. For a full report of this speech, *vide* Appendix A. Rana Shankar Baksh attended the meetings of the Legislative Council, held on the 15th, the 24th and the 30th of September 1886. The

Oudh Rent Bill was passed at the meeting held on the last-named date. The Rana moved a number of amendments with a view to eliminating some of the objectionable provisions of that measure, but as most of his amendments were opposed by Government, they were lost. But some of the suggestions made by him were accepted by Government. For a full report of the speech which he delivered at this meeting, *vide* Appendix B.

The services which Rana Shankar Baksh rendered in the Legislative Council to the Taluqdars of Oudh as well as to Government in connection with the Oudh Rent Act of 1886, were acknowledged in appropriate terms by the Viceroy and the leading Members of His Excellency's Government.

Sir Auckland Colvin, the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Department of Finance, said:—

"I trust I may be allowed to bear my tribute to what has seemed to me to have been, during the course of the deliberations in which I have shared, the extremely reasonable and equitable spirit in which, whether in official or in non-official conferences, my hon'ble friend Rana Shankar Baksh Singh and the Taluqdars, who have accompanied him, have approached this subject which, necessarily to them in a degree not less than to the Government, involves issues of extreme importance."

Mr. Ilbert (Law Member) said:—

"In the performance of this task, we have had the assistance not only of my hon'ble friend, Rana Shankar

Baksh Singh, but of the gentlemen who have accompanied him from Oudh. We have been able to meet my hon'ble friend, Rana Shankar Baksh Singh, in both of the two points to which he took special exception in the Bill, as introduced, I mean on the question of compensation for disturbance, and with respect to the clause providing special machinery for enforcing the conditions of the *Sanads*."

His Excellency the Viceroy said:—

"I especially desire to congratulate my hon'ble colleague, who represents the Taluqdars of Oudh, upon the manner in which he has brought to notice the views of himself and his associates regarding the Bill, and on the successful manner in which he has vindicated their interests and set forth their moderate and reasonable demands."

Rana Shankar Baksh attended the cold-weather session of the Imperial Legislative Council in Calcutta in 1887, and had the honour of serving on the Select Committees appointed to report upon the following Bills:—

The Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to Guardian and Ward.

The Bill to amend the law relating to Imprisonment for Debt.

The Bill to prescribe the mode of valuing certain suits for the purpose of determining the Jurisdiction of Courts with respect thereto.

The Bill to amend the Code of Civil Procedure and the Indian Limitation Act.

The speech, delivered by Rana Shankar Baksh on the Suits Valuation Bill at the meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council, held in Calcutta on the 28th of January 1887, is printed as Appendix C.

The last speech delivered in the Legislative Council by the Hon'ble Rana Sir Shankar Baksh Singh Bahadur, K.C.I.E., was the one on the Petroleum Bill, which was delivered at the meeting of the Legislative Council held in Calcutta on the 3rd of February 1888. It will be found as Appendix D.

In 1887, the year of the Jubilee of the reign of the late Queen Empress, the Rana Saheb was elevated to the dignity of a Knight Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire. The Sanad conferring upon him the title of K.C.I.E. is published below—

VICTORIA REGINA.

Victoria by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, Empress of India and Sovereign of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire, to Rana Shankar Baksh Singh Bahadur, Companion of our said Order of the Indian Empire, Additional Member of the Council of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India for making Laws and Regulations, Greeting: Whereas we have thought fit to nominate and appoint you a Knight Commander of our said Order of the Indian Empire, We do by these Presents

grant unto you the dignity of a Knight Commander of our said Order, and hereby authorize you to have, hold, and enjoy the said dignity and rank as a Knight Commander of our said Most Eminent Order, together with all and singular the privileges thereunto belonging or appertaining.

Given at our Court at Osborne under our Sign Manual and the Seal of our said Order, this fifteenth day of February, 1887, in the fiftieth year of our Reign.

By the Sovereign's Command.

CROSS.

The Taluqdars of Oudh gave a grand entertainment in honour of the Rana Saheb, which was attended by all the Civil and Military Officers at Lucknow. On the eve of his retirement from the satrapy of the United Provinces, Sir Alfred Lyall specially recommended certain Taluqdars to his successor, and foremost amongst them all was the Hon'ble Rana Sir Shankar Baksh Singh Bahadur, K.C.I.E. We find from the records of the British Indian Association that at the very first interview which the Rana had with Sir Auckland Colvin, who succeeded Sir Alfred Lyall, he succeeded in inducing the new Lieutenant-Governor to sanction the scheme for the establishment of a School for the sons of Taluqdars, on the model of the Rajkumar Colleges, of which he was one of the prime movers. In April 1888, a Committee was appointed with Colonel Erskine as President and Rana Sir Shankar Baksh Bahadur, K.C.I.E., as Vice-President to carry out the scheme. The Colvin Taluqdars' School is now a flourishing institution, and to none is it

indebted more for its foundation and prosperity than to Rana Sir Shankar Baksh Singh Bahadur. Faithful to the feudal traditions of his family, Rana Sir Shankar Baksh suggested to Government that the Talukdars should be placed in a position to help Government with troops, if necessary. His suggestion was accepted by Government and 180 Taluqdars obtained permission to maintain regular troops.

Though belonging to the old school, the Rana Saheb was shrewd and enlightened enough to perceive that the extension of railways was necessary in the interests of the development of the trade of the country. On his motion, the British Indian Association submitted to Government a representation suggesting the construction of railways through Rai Bareli, Sultanpur and Pertabgarh. Social reform claimed no small share of the attention of the Rana Saheb. Through his exertions the British Indian Association took up in right earnest the question of the curtailment of expenses on the occasions of marriages and funerals. Circulars were issued to all Taluqdars, a Central Committee was formed at Lucknow, and a Local Committee was established in every district to further the cause of social reform. The Rana Saheb was most zealous in his efforts to improve the position and raise the status of the Taluqdars. At his instance, the Association submitted a representation to Government, suggesting the revival of the ancient custom of receiving *nazars* and granting *khilats* at Durbars. In reply the Government promised to consider the suggestion.

Rana Sir Shankar Baksh Singh Bahadur was an Honorary Magistrate and Assistant Collector and was

noted for his disinterested devotion to his civic duties. As Vice-President of the Taluqdars' Association, he was often called upon to give his opinion on intricate questions of Legislation or Administration, and it is a striking tribute to his tact and transparent honesty, that he should have retained to the last the confidence and esteem alike of high officials and of the "Barons bold" of Oudh. To his philanthropy and public-spirited liberality, as shown during successive famines, some reference has already been made in this Chapter. He never let his right-hand know what his left hand did, kept no record of his public or private charities and would have certainly scorned to advertise them. We believe the Dufferin Hospital at Rai Bareli was built out of funds mainly contributed by Rana Sir Shankar Baksh and partly raised by public subscriptions. It has rarely fallen to the lot of an Indian nobleman to have made such a favourable impression upon the very highest officials in the land as did Rana Sir Shankar Baksh upon those with whom he happened to be brought into contact. The following letter, written to the Rana by the late Sir John Woodburn, K.C.S.I., who was then the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Home Department of the Government of India, and subsequently rose to the Lieutenant-Governorship of Bengal and died while occupying that exalted position, will, we trust, fully bear out what is stated above:—

SIMLA, 30th July 1897.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

I have been greatly distressed and touched by the letter from you that reached me last night. It was a

deep disappointment to me that I had to go to Poona instead of Lucknow. The one pleasure I had in my journey was the prospect of seeing you, and the trust I had of cheering you into a more hopeful state. Your disease causes great despondency and you need an old friend to brighten you up.

I have a fortnight's arrears to clear off or I would go now to cheer you.

Be of good comfort, my dear Rana Saheb. I never deserted a friend—least of all would I fail to you or yours—you who are the truest, straightest, most upright Indian I have ever known—a Rajput like an Englishman.

Believe me always,

Your true and affectionate friend,

J. WOODBURN.

RANA SIR SHANKAR BAKSH SINGH, BAHADUR, K.C.I.E.

It may be stated here that no inconsiderable portion of the official life of the late Sir John Woodburn was spent in Oudh and that he was on most intimate terms with many of the leading Taluqdars. It is evident that the letter quoted above was in reply to a letter written by the Rana complaining of his serious illness. Within two months of the receipt of Sir John Woodburn's letter, its recipient passed away to where beyond these voices there is peace. On the 1st of October, 1897, Rana Sir Shankar Baksh Singh Bahadur, K.C.I.E., breathed his last in the fulness, if not of years,

certainly of honours and deeply lamented by a large circle of friends and admirers.

Reference has already been made to the services rendered by Rana Sir Shankar Baksh Singh Bahadur during the famine of 1877. He rendered equally valuable services during the famine of 1896-97, in reward of which he was to be presented with a testimonial at the Durbar held at Lucknow. He died before receiving this testimonial, a copy of which is printed below—

BY COMMAND OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY AND
GOVERNOR-GENERAL IN COUNCIL

This **Certificate** is presented in the name of
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY QUEEN
VICTORIA, EMPRESS OF INDIA,

TO

Late RANA SIR SHANKAR BAKSH SINGH, K.C.I.E., Taluqdar
of Khajurgaon in the Rai Bareli District,

In recognition of the meritorious services rendered by him
during the Famine of 1896-97 in the North-Western
Provinces and Oudh.

(Sd.) A. P. MACDONNELL,

Lieutenant-Governor, N.-W. P. and Oudh.

January 1st, 1898.



CHAPTER IX.

RANA SHEW RAJ SINGH BAHADUR.

*A Prosperous Landlord—A Promising Career—Family
—The Bais Rajputs—Khajurgaon.*

RANA SIR SHANKAR BAKSH SINGH BAHADUR, K.C.I.E., was succeeded by his second son, Shew Raj Sing, the present Rana; his eldest son, Lal Chandra Bhukan Singh, born in 1860, having pre-deceased him. Rana Shew Raj Singh Bahadur was born in 1865, and had the advantage of being trained in the management of the ancestral estate by his illustrious father. He holds no fewer than one hundred and thirty villages in the District of Rai Bareli, comprising one hundred and forty mahals—eighty-eight in Dalmau Pergana, twenty-five in Rai Bareli, seventeen in Khiron, and ten in Sareni. Besides, he is the proprietor of Ibrahimgunj estate of two villages in Lucknow and of the Karohia property of two villages in Kheri. In addition, he has possession, under an usufructuary mortgage, of ninety-seven villages of Murar Mau Taluq, which will run till 1914. The present Rana is pre-eminently noted for his enlightened and public-spirited liberality. At Khajurgaon itself, he maintains a dispensary, speaking of which, Mr. H. R. Nevill, I.C.S., the compiler of the latest *Gazetteer* (1905) of the Rai Bareli District, writes as follows:—

“Every hospital showed a marked decrease in attendance, save that at Khajurgaon, which appears from the returns to be steadily rising in popularity.”



Rana Shew Raj Singh Bahadur.

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A Prosperous Landlord—A Promising Career—Family

—The Bais Rajputs—Khajurgaon.

RANA SIRDHANNAKAR BAKSH SINGH BAHADUR, K.C.I.E., was succeeded by his second son, Shew Raj Sing, the present Rana. His eldest son, Lal Chandra Bhukan Singh, born in 1891, having pre-deceased him. Rana Shew Raj Singh Bahadur was born in 1865 and had the advantage of being trained in the management of the ancestral estate by his illustrious father. He holds no fewer than one hundred and thirty villages in the District of Rai Bareilly, comprising one hundred and forty mahals—eighty-eight in Dalmau Pargana, twenty-five in Rai Bareilly, seventeen in Khirki and ten in Sareni. Besides, he is the proprietor of the Rahingunj estate of two villages in Faizabad and of the Karohia property of two villages in Faizabad. In addition, he has possession, under an usufructuary mortgage, of ninety-seven villages of Murar Mauzabad, which will run till 1914. The present Rana is pre-eminently noted for his enlightened and public-spirited liberalism. At Khajurgaon itself, he maintains a dispensary, some of which, Mr. H. R. Nevill, I.C.S., the compiler of the latest *Gazetteer* (1905) of the Rai Bareilly District states as follows:—

Every hospital showed a marked decrease in attendance, so that at Khajurgaon, which appears from the statistics to be steadily rising in popularity."



Rana Shew Raj Singh Bahadur.

The Rana also maintains a large Upper Primary School—with an average daily attendance of fifty—and a market called Raghunathganj. He is an Honorary Magistrate with second class powers within the limits of his estate, and also an Honorary Munsiff having civil jurisdiction over Pergana Khiron.

The present Rana has made a donation of Rs. 20,000 towards the funds of the proposed Medical College at Lucknow, which has been supplemented by an additional contribution of Rs. 8,000 from the Rani Saheba of Khajurgao. He also gave a handsome donation for the construction of a Memorial Hall in connection with the Colvin Taluqdars' School at Lucknow. Here is a list of his principal donations exclusive of those mentioned above—

	Rs.
Colvin Taluqdars' School ...	3,500
Transvaal War Orphans' Fund ...	1,000
Meywar Famine Fund ...	500
Rajputna do. do. ...	1,000
Victoria Memorial ...	4,000
Woodburn Memorial ...	1,200
Benett Memorial ...	5,000

The present Rana has also founded the Hardy Gold Medal in connection with the Colvin Taluqdars' School. He received the thanks of Government for his presentation of a case of instruments to the Hospital at

Rai Bareli, as will appear from the Certificate printed below :—

BY COMMAND OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY
AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL IN COUNCIL

This **Certificate** is presented in the name of
HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY, KING EDWARD
VII, EMPEROR OF INDIA,

TO

RANA SHEW RAJ SINGH of Thalrai (Khajurgaon) Rai
Bareli District, in recognition of his having presented the
Rai Bareli Hospital with a much needed and valuable
case of Instruments.

(Sd.) J. DIGGES LATOUCHE,

Lieutenant-Governor, United Provinces

of Agra and Oudh.

January 1st, 1903.

For the assistance given by him to the operations
of the Vaccination Department in the District of Rai
Bareli, Rana Shew Raj Singh Bahadur has been repeated-
ly thanked by Government. The letter printed below
speaks for itself—

No. 2536.

Dated, Lucknow, the 30th August 1902.

FROM

THE SANITARY COMMISSIONER,

United Provinces of Agra and Oudh,

To

RANA SHEW RAJ SINGH

of Thalrai, Khajurgaon, District Rai Bareli.

SIR,

As directed by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor,
I have the honour to convey to you the acknowledgments

of Government for the special assistance you gave to the operations of the Vaccination Department during the season 1901-2.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

(Sd.) J. CHAYTOR WHITE, M.D., D.P.H., *Major, I.M.S.,
Sanitary Commissioner, United Provinces
of Agra and Oudh.*

Similar acknowledgments have been made in each successive year.

The following testimonials will, we venture to think, not be considered out of place here :—

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,
Rai Bareli, March 10th, 1900.

RANA SHEW RAJ SINGH, son of Rana Sir Shankar Baksh Singh, K.C.I.E., has been in possession of the Khajurgaon Taluqa while I have been in this district. I have always found him a pleasant gentleman to deal with in business and in other matters. In Court of Wards, he gave us great assistance in the settlement of Murar Mau affairs, and, but for his timely help, we should have had a very difficult task. He has given me very sound advice when dealing with Court of Wards family matters in the Onar Estate, and has always been ready to assist when assistance in any matter was asked of him. He is an Honorary Magistrate, and I hope, will soon exercise second class powers. He, when on the District Board, was a frequent

attendant, and I hope he will represent his tahsil again this year.

(Sd.) P. WYNDHAM,
Deputy Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,
Lucknow Division.

RANA SHEW RAJ SINGH of Khajurgaon is one of the principal Taluqdars of this Division, and well known as an enlightened and public-spirited gentleman. He has asked me for this note which I have much pleasure in giving him before I leave India.

(Sd.) J. S. C. DAVIS,
Commissioner.

LUCKNOW,
23rd March 1906. }

DURING the management of the present Rana, the Khajurgaon estate has become one of the wealthiest in Oudh. In the *Rai Bareilly Gazetteer*, Khajurgaon heads the list of "the Taluqas which have prospered most" in the District.

Rana Shew Raj Singh Bahadur was first married to a daughter of Babu Amarjit Singh, a Bisin Rajput by caste and a younger brother of the Raja of Majhoulie. This lady having died in 1888, the Rana next married a daughter of Raja Somessur Dutt Singh, a Bachhgottee Rajput by caste and Raja of Kundwar. She having died in 1897, the Rana married his present Rani, who is a daughter of the Raja of Bijipur in the Mirzapur District, by caste a Gaherwar Rajput.



Kunwar Lal Umchahy Bahadur Singh Bahadur.

attendant, and I hope he will represent his tahsil again this year.

(Sd.) P. WYNDHAM,

Deputy Commissioner

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,

Lucknow Division.

RANA RAJ SINGH of Khajurgaon is one of the principal landlords of this Division, and well known as an enlightened and public-spirited gentleman. He has asked me for a note which I have much pleasure in giving him before I leave India.

(Sd.) J. S. C. DAVIS,

Commissioner.

LUCKNOW,

23rd March 1906.

DURING the management of the present Rana, the Khajurgaon estate has become one of the wealthiest in India. In the *Bareilly Gazetteer*, Khajurgaon heads the list of Taluqas which have prospered most in the District.

Rana Jaw Raj Singh Bahadur was first married to a daughter of Babu Amarjit Singh, a Bisin Rajput by caste, a younger brother of the Raja of Majhoulie. This lady having died in 1888, the Rana next married a daughter of Raja Somessur Dutt Singh, a Bachhgote Rajput by caste and Raja of Kundwar. She having died in 1897, the Rana married his present Rani, who is a daughter of the Raja of Bijipur in the Mirzapur District, by caste a Gahwar Rajput.



Kunwar Lal Umanath Baksh Singh Bahadur.

Lal Umanath Baksh Singh, the eldest son of Rana Shew Raj Singh, was born on the 20th of November 1888. He received a fair education at the Colvin Taluqdars' School and has latterly been assisting his father in the management of the estate. He was married, first to a daughter of the Maharaja of Sirguja, a Political Chief in the Ranchi District, in Bengal and a Reckumbansi Rajput by caste, and secondly to a daughter of General Padam Jung Rana Bahadur by caste a Sismadhya Rajput and a brother of the Maharana of Udepur.

Shumbhunath Baksh Singh, the second son of Rana Shew Raj Singh Bahadur, was born in 1890, and married a daughter of Babu Indrasen Singh of Dhurooa in the Fyzabad District, a Raj Kumar Rajput by caste. Lal Umanath Baksh Singh, the eldest son of the Rana, had a son born to him in 1905, and in the following year a son was born to his second son who has been adopted by Babuain Ratan Kunwar as her son and is the heir to the Katghar Estate.

When he was little over twenty years of age, Rana Shew Raj Singh accompanied his father to Calcutta when he went there to attend the meetings of the Supreme Legislative Council. Twenty years later, the Rana paid another visit to Calcutta, as a member of the deputation from the Taluqdars, which waited upon His Excellency the Earl of Minto to present him with an Address of Welcome on his assumption of the Viceroyalty of India. The Rana was struck by the various Municipal improvements which he noticed in Calcutta on the occasion of this visit and communicated his reflections to the *Englishman*

Newspaper in the form of a letter which is reproduced as Appendix E.

In Calcutta, His Excellency the Earl of Minto and His Excellency Viscount Kitchener were graciously pleased to grant the Rana a private interview. In February 1906, the Jubilee of the British annexation of Oudh took place, and the occasion drew forth from the Rana a very thoughtful letter which appeared in the *Pioneer*. The head of a fighting Clan, the Rana could not help expressing a sneaking partiality for the old feudal regime, but neither did he omit to point out in his paper how much the Province had benefited by the change which placed it under direct administration by the British authorities. This letter will be found as Appendix F. and will, we trust, amply repay perusal.

A few words concerning the Bais Rajputs, of whom the Rana of Khajurgaon is one of the honoured Chiefs, may not be inappropriate here.

In *Ain-i-Akbari* we read of a Bais Rajput named Kalidas Gajdani who made himself supreme in Southern Bengal in the middle of the sixteenth century, and whose still more famous son, who became a convert to Islam and assumed the name of Isha Khan, was the most powerful among the twelve Bhuiyas by whom Bengal was ruled, down to the early years of the seventeenth century.

As soldiers, the Bais Rajputs had greatly distinguished themselves in the past and certainly even at the

present time their right hand has not lost its cunning of old days. They gave an excellent account of themselves in the several engagements in which they took part during the dark days of the Mutiny. Speaking of the Zemindari levies, who, led by their Chiefs, opposed the English, and among whom the Rajputs preponderated, Sir Hope Grant, the Commander of the British Column that operated in Oudh, writes:—

“It certainly could not be said of these fine fellows that they were ‘contemptible to their enemies,’ for, in a few minutes, they were pouring through the wall like wild fire, carrying every thing before them.”

In another place, Sir Hope Grant writes:—

“A large body of fine, daring, Zemindari men brought two guns into the open and attacked us in rear. I have seen many battles in India, and many brave fellows fighting with a determination to conquer or die, but I never witnessed any thing more magnificent than the conduct of these Zemindaries.”

Referring to the Bais fort of Dhundia Khera, supposed to have been originally built by Tilokchand, the same eminent authority, whom we have already quoted, writes:—

“It was one of the most formidable forts I had ever seen in India, with large enormously thick mud walls and surrounded by a jungle so dense as to be imperviable, except where pathways had been cut.”

We believe even now, when the pen and the plough have supplanted the sword, the Bais Rajputs are strongly represented in the Native Army.

Rana Shew Raj Singh Bahadur is a pious and orthodox Hindu and has been a strict vegetarian since his pilgrimage to the Temple of Rameswar in the southernmost extremity of India, some years ago. He was accompanied in his pilgrimage by hundreds of his relations and retainers, very few of whom would have had an opportunity of visiting that most ancient and venerated but too distant shrine of Hinduism, had it not been for the Rana's generous assistance.

Many of the Bais Rajputs have now-a-days taken to commercial and banking pursuits for which they seem to have no little aptitude. To quote an English author, the Bais "claim to be the most enterprising, the best dressed and the wealthiest house in Oudh." A curious custom prevails among them. Their women never wear cotton cloth of any other colour than white and no silver may be worn above the ankles.

The village of Khajurgaon, the seat of the Rana, which can already claim an antiquity of several centuries, having been originally founded by Rana Har Har Deo, is situated on the banks of the Ganges in latitude $26^{\circ} 51'$ north and longitude $80^{\circ} 57'$ east, at a distance of about 5 miles from Dalmau. It covers an area of 1,169 acres and its population, according to the Census of 1901, was 2,638 including 183 Mahomedans.

We present to the public this brief sketch of the history of the house of Khajurgaon and trust it will not prove altogether uninteresting.



APPENDIX A.

*Speech by the HON'BLE RANA SIR SHANKAR BAKSH SINGH
BAHADUR, K.C.I.E., in the Imperial Legislative Council on
the Oudh Rent Bill, Simla, June 9th, 1886.*

MY LORD,—As a Member of this Hon'ble Council, I feel it my duty to express my humble views on the broad and difficult questions involved in the Oudh Rent Bill which is now before your Excellency's Council. But I shall confine myself to a few remarks which will not take up much of the valuable time of the Hon'ble Members.

From the results of formal and elaborate enquiries, which have from time to time been made into a tenant-right in Oudh, it has been universally admitted that the landlords in Oudh have never practised extortion towards their tenants. In support of this, I respectfully refer your Lordship to the Minute of his Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, North-Western Provinces and Oudh, dated 28th December 1882, to letter No. 135, dated 1st June 1883, from Major Erskine, the Special Commissioner, and to letter No. 3939, dated 21st December 1882, from the Secretary to the Government of North-Western Provinces and Oudh.

In the face of such high authorities exonerating the Taluqdars from the charge of rack-renting and oppression, I humbly submit that I am quite unable to understand how such a charge can for a moment be supposed to be true or well-founded and how the notorious Sahlamao case can be cited in support thereof.

The Sanads granted to the Taluqdars, when read with the letters of the 10th and 19th October 1859, leave no doubt as to the fact of the protection, therein afforded, being confined, with certain conditions, to those under-proprietors who occupied an intermediate position between the superior proprietors or taluqdars and tenants-at-will and who were actually found to possess an occupancy right in 1855. But in obedience to the will of Government, and with the sole view of benefiting these intermediate holders, the taluqdars have loyally submitted to the extension of the period, during which their claims may be heard, to twelve years. This is sufficiently proved by the following legislative enactments and official circulars to which I humbly draw the special attention of this Hon'ble Council :—

By Act XVI of 1865, the period in question was extended from the 13th February 1844 to the 13th February 1856.

By Act XXVI of 1866, under-proprietory rights in *sir*, &c., were conceded to sub-lessees and under-proprietors.

By Act XIII of 1866 the right of redemption of mortgage was allowed contrary to the express provisions of the Sanad.

By Circular IV of 1867 compensation was made to *ex*-proprietors in the shape of an under-proprietory title.

By Section 5, Act XIX of 1868, a right of occupancy was conferred on *ex*-proprietors in their *khudkasht* land.

Having mentioned briefly some of the most valuable concessions made by the Taluqdars in favour of their tenants, I proceed to examine the broader question of an alleged "tenant-right" in Oudh. On this important question, I think, I cannot do better than draw the attention of the Hon'ble

Council to the elaborate and complete enquiries made in 1865, which resulted in the famous Despatch of Her Majesty's Secretary of State, dated 10th February 1865, wherein it was finally settled and authoritatively declared that no tenant-right had ever existed in Oudh, that is, tenants-at-will possessed no right whatever in the land they cultivated. But the Taluqdars of Oudh, in deference to the wishes of Government and with the sole view of gaining their good-will and promoting the welfare of their tenants, have, of their own accord, by a Resolution of the Committee of the British Indian Association, held on the 22nd April 1886, agreed to make two fresh valuable concessions in favour of the latter, and cheerfully accepted the rules of seven years' lease and of the limitation of enhancements, subject to the following very important exceptions :—

- (a) *Nautore* (land given on clearance lease) ;
- (b) *Banjar* ;
- (c) Jungle ;
- (d) New alluvial land ;
- (e) *Parti* ;
- (f) Land rendered culturable by the land-lord at his own expense.

Thus, my Lord, the taluqdars of Oudh have, on every occasion, proved their loyalty and devotion to the British Government, have always earnestly endeavoured to gain its good-will and have always shown moderation and liberality to their tenants and those who hold under them. Under these circumstances, I respectfully submit that the charge of rack-renting and oppression brought against them is far from being just and reasonable. But as experience has shown that Section 43. Act XIX of 1868 has not worked as well as could be desired, and that some amendment should be made therein in the interests of all concerned, I do not feel myself justified in saying that I hold a different opinion.

Now, with your Lordship's permission, I propose to examine some other provisions of the Oudh Rent Bill, which, in my humble opinion, are open to serious objections.

Among these, I would, with due deference, draw your Lordship's attention to the provisions of Section 38(A) regarding compensation for disturbance, and of Section 129 authorising the Local Government to interfere in cases of great mismanagement. These Sections, I humbly submit, should be entirely expunged from the Bill, because "compensation" presupposes the existence of a right in lieu whereof something is given. If this compensation is for ejection, it involves the loss of the proprietary rights of the landlords and will inevitably have the effect of depriving them thereof. It will be a very great hardship to the landlord, if after being debarred from ejecting his tenant for seven years and enhancing his rent beyond one anna in the rupee on the expiration of that period, he is compelled to pay one year's rent to the tenant so ejected. Such a measure would almost be intolerable to the landlord. As an illustration of this, I would humbly ask your Lordship to look into the case of a tenant, who has to pay an annual rent of one hundred Rupees, and who, on being ejected after the expiration of the statutory period of seven years, is paid that amount, and the land is let to another tenant on a rent of Rs. 100 *plus* Rs. 6-4. During the next seven years the landlord will realize from the new tenant Rs. 43-12 only, which is less than one-half of the amount he has paid to the old one as compensation for disturbance; that is to say, out of a total rent of Rs. 100, the landlord will lose Rs. 56-4 and will have no prospect of realizing that amount from any one by any means, nor will he be able to recoup himself during the next fourteen years for the loss thus sustained. The compensation for disturbance rule, which is a very hard and fast rule indeed, will, in the long run, deprive the landlord of his power of

ejectment altogether, and will give the tenant a right to hold the land for a practically unlimited period. Upon those who cannot afford to pay any compensation at all, it will have the effect of permanently transferring their properties to their tenants. It is the duty of this Hon'ble Council to have due regard for the rights and interests of all classes for whom it proposes to legislate.

Another effect of this compensation for disturbance rule will be that it will be an irresistible temptation to tenants to shift their holdings as frequently as they can, and will set them wandering about in quest of better land and a more lenient landlord from whom they could squeeze a larger amount as compensation for disturbance. One of the main objects of this Bill, as I understand it, is to give fixity of tenure to the cultivator and to induce him to devote more time and labour to the cultivation of his holding. This object, I humbly submit, will be utterly defeated by the rule in question, which, diverting the tenant's attention from the cultivation of his holding will fix it on compensation. This, as a matter of fact, will lead to the deterioration of the soil and will leave no chance of its improvement. What justification is there, I would respectfully ask, for depriving the party, justly entitled, of a portion of his right and giving it to another party which does not possess the shadow of a right? Will it be just and reasonable to deprive the landlord of the only means of getting rid of a bad tenant by making this objectionable rule applicable to all classes of tenants? The ejectment of recalcitrant tenants should, like that of defaulters, be made a rule rather than an exception.

Now, with due respect and deference, I beg to draw the attention of this Hon'ble Council to the provision of Section 129. I will not dwell upon the reasons and motives which

have prompted the insertion of this Section in the present Bill. I will leave it to the Hon'ble Members to consider and decide whether it is necessary to retain this Section after adequate provisions have been made for fixing the term of the lease and limiting the enhancement of rent. The term of the lease having been fixed and the rate of enhancement limited, I humbly submit that this Section seems to me to be entirely unnecessary and undesirable and should be expunged from the Bill.

In conclusion, I humbly pray that sufficient time may be allowed to the taluqdars for submitting their objections to certain provisions of this Bill and suggesting some useful provisions for insertion therein, and explaining the exceptions subject to which they have accepted the rules of seven years' lease and of the enhancement of rent. I beg leave to support the motion that the Oudh Rent Bill be committed to the Select Committee for consideration and report.

APPENDIX B.

Speech by the HON'BLE RANA SIR SHANKAR BAKSH SINGH BAHADUR, K.C.I.E., on the Oudh Rent Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council on the 30th September 1886.

THE Hon'ble Rana Shankar Baksh Singh addressed the Council in Vernacular, a translation of his remarks being read by the Secretary as follows :—

With your Lordship's permission, I humbly beg to offer a few remarks on the Oudh Rent Bill, as amended by the Select Committee and submitted to this Hon'ble Council for consideration and final disposal.

When the Bill was initiated it could hardly be expected that such important, difficult, and intricate questions as it involved would be so easily and promptly settled. But the difficulties, which then appeared to be almost insurmountable, have, I am glad to say, been successfully removed ; and this desirable end has been achieved no less through the special attention bestowed on the subject by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, and the keen interest taken by His Honor in the discussion and settlement of details, than through the peaceful disposition and loyal conduct of the Taluqdars.

I think I need scarcely remind this Hon'ble Council how the Taluqdars had, subject to certain important exceptions, accepted the two main principles of the Bill,—I mean the rules about the seven years' lease, and the limitation of enhancement to one anna in the rupee,—and how the Local Government had consented to expunge Section 129 of the original Bill and the rule about compensation for disturbance. But, in order to more effectually check evictions, it was subsequently resolved that a stamp duty be levied on all ejectment notices, and that, if the Landlord desired to be exempted from the payment of such duty, he should be allowed to grant a longer lease. The last plan was suggested by your Excellency in the speech on the Rent Bill made on the 9th June last.

The way these points were settled may be readily ascertained from the correspondence on the subject and need not be explained here. After the more important questions had been satisfactorily settled, the minor objections of the Taluqdars were considered ; and the few amendments proposed by them after careful consideration, and in a fair and unprejudiced spirit, were wholly or partially approved by

the Local Government, adopted by the Select Committee and embodied by them in the Bill now before your Excellency's Council.

The Taluqdars' objections to Section 4 of the Bill, though respectfully urged, were exceptionally strong and attracted sufficient attention at the time; but subsequently it was found impossible to amend this section to the extent they desired, because any further amendment would make it inconsistent with the principles of the seven years' lease and the limitation of enhancement as finally accepted by the Taluqdars.

As regards Section 51 of the present Bill, the Taluqdars had requested that it should be expunged, but the Local Government did not recommend this, and in Select Committee the Section was left to stand as it is. In my humble opinion this section should be maintained, and with your Lordship's permission, I will briefly state the reasons which have led me to this conclusion.

Though the Taluqdars have, from philanthropic and liberal motives or in deference to the wishes of Government, accepted the provision as to limitation of enhancement to one anna in the rupee, it is not unlikely that after a few years' experience the Government will find the rule in question inapplicable to all classes of land. There are certain descriptions of land which will not admit of any enhancement at all, while there are others for which the proposed enhancement of one anna in the rupee will be quite insufficient, and a third class of land will only bear an enhancement of less than one anna in the rupee. From the incidence of enhancement on all the three classes of land the Landlord is sure to suffer heavily, and the Government will equally

suffer in its revenue at a future settlement. Under these circumstances, it will become necessary to vary the limits of enhancement according to the descriptions and capacities of land, and raise or lower the amount of enhancement as the circumstances of each case may demand. It is to be hoped that the powers thus given to the Local Government will be exercised by it judiciously. I am humbly but firmly of opinion that, owing to a rise in the market-rates and the improved means of communication, especially in those parts of the country to which the railway line has not yet been extended, it will become absolutely necessary to vary the limits of enhancement.

My Lord, the Taluqdars have loyally sacrificed their interests and shown great moderation and liberality to their tenants, and as their objections are conceived in a perfectly fair and loyal spirit and couched in the most respectful terms, I have felt it my duty as a Member of the Select Committee to try as best as I could to obtain a fair and impartial consideration for all and each of their objections. But I was compelled to agree with my learned and Hon'ble colleagues of the Select Committee in rejecting some of those objections for reasons which they were good enough to explain to me. Greatly as I wished that there should be no reason for my holding a different view, I regret to say that I was reluctantly compelled to record my dissent on some important points in a minute annexed to the Select Committee's Report now before the Hon'ble Council. The Taluqdars' objections to the provisions of Section 19 for the remission of rent are not unreasonable. What they want is that either Section 23 of the North-Western Provinces Rent Act XII of 1881 be applied to Oudh or that Section 20, Act XIX of 1868, which has long been in force in Oudh, be maintained. If the

Government is disposed to show more mercy to tenants, it should equally divide between itself and the Landlord the losses caused by unforeseen calamities.

In fact, the Landlords of Oudh are not better off than those of the adjoining districts of the North-Western Provinces. In some districts of the North-Western Provinces, where the Permanent Settlement is in force and which have long enjoyed the blessings of peace, the Landlords surpass the Landowners of Oudh in wealth and prosperity. Oudh has as yet known only a thirty years' settlement, and during the last thirty years of internal peace and security, it has been disturbed by the harassing operations of a number of settlements giving rise to countless disputes and producing disastrous litigation. The Landlords of Oudh are therefore by no means less entitled to the favourable consideration of the Government than those of the North-Western Provinces, and if in the North-Western Provinces, a remission of rent to tenants is followed by a remission of the revenue to the Landlords, it is but just and reasonable that the same rule should be held good for Oudh. The Chief Secretary to the Government, North-Western Provinces and Oudh, in his letter No. $\frac{2456 \text{ R.}}{208-60}$, dated the 6th instant, has laid some stress on the fact that in practice the rule in question has led to serious errors, but from this, I humbly submit, it does not necessarily follow that the rule is radically wrong or defective and cannot be rectified or improved under proper supervision and by suitable instructions. If, however, it is considered desirable that this rule should not be introduced in Oudh, then the rule laid down in Section 20 of the present Rent Act, which has been in force for 18 years and has worked so well and without prejudice to either party, need not be altered. The only ground on which it seems possible to make

the proposed alteration is to give the statutory tenant the benefit of a remission of rent under exceptional circumstances, in addition to the statutory privileges already conferred upon him. But the tenant's claim to a remission of rent falls to the ground when it is considered that he has obtained such valuable concessions from his Landlord, who, for seven long years will not be able to share the benefits the tenant will derive from the improved capacity of the land comprised in his holding, from the increased means of communication or from high market rates, and who cannot enhance the rent beyond one anna in the Rupee even after the expiration of that period. If the tenant is entitled to get the full benefit of his cultivation, he must be held equally liable to any accidental loss that may be caused by unforeseen calamities; and for which he can compensate himself from abundant crops in better years. But, if the Landlord is made to bear the loss, he will have no means whatever of compensating himself for it. Further, the rule in question has not proved prejudicial to tenants in Oudh holding five years' leases.

The third alternative proposed by the Taluqdars rests on an equally just and equitable principle. As the Government gets one-half of what is paid to the Landlord as rent, it is bound in justice to him to grant a remission of the revenue equal to half the rent remitted to the tenant by its Officers. The Landlords have good reasons to think that, if the connection of Government is maintained, tenants will not dare prefer false or frivolous claims and the Government Officers will investigate such claims with due care.

On Section 27, I humbly beg to observe, that the recommendations of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor may be adopted with advantage. Purely conjectural estimates of compensation for improvements have, in practice, been found

erroneous, though estimates carefully made by experienced and honest men may be safely relied upon. But such men are hardly obtainable in this country for the execution of such a petty task, and His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor has justly approved of the amendment proposed by the Taluqdars.

As regards Section 29, I humbly beg to observe, that there is nothing in the whole Bill to prevent the tenant from making whatever improvement he likes, but it does not provide for the award of a compensation to the Landlord or other tenants, if the improvement effected by the sitting tenant causes any loss or damage to them. In Oudh, the tenant has no right whatever in the land he cultivates, and he may possibly make an improvement with the intention of occasioning loss to his Landlord or other tenants.

I humbly submit, my Lord, that I am at a loss to understand why special provision should be made for the award by the Landlord of an additional compensation to the tenant for any loss that may be caused to his (landlord's) own land by an improvement made by himself. It is quite clear that the landlord will not do anything which might prove prejudicial to himself.

Now with your Lordship's permission, I will briefly explain the losses which an improvement made by landlord might possibly be conceived to cause to a tenant. In the first place, the landlord sinks wells in the holdings of his tenants during a particular season of the year, that is, May or June, when there are no standing crops which might possibly be injured thereby. The rainy and the cold seasons are not favourable to the construction of wells which are exclusively made in summer.

In the second place, even if a well sunk by the landlord in the holding of his tenant produces salt water, which is not favourable to cultivation generally, such water may nevertheless be utilized in raising a tobacco crop or other crops of a similar nature, to the growth of which irrigation with salt water has been found to be highly conducive. The tenant may not use such water for purposes of cultivation if he apprehends any loss or damage from using it.

Thirdly, the construction of an embankment is a rare occurrence. Embankments are seldom or never constructed within cultivated areas, and cannot therefore cause any loss or damage to a tenant. But the tenant may himself injure his holding by opening an embankment suddenly and carelessly and letting in an excessive quantity of water, in which case the landlord cannot justly be made to share the blame which naturally attaches to the tenant. In my humble opinion, the construction of an embankment cannot possibly tend to impair the productive powers of land, and there is no necessity for making a special provision to that effect. It will be a great discouragement, if not a perfect bar to improvements, if landlords are required to pay additional compensation for accidental losses. The more useful and costly improvements are effected by landlords, and not by tenants. The rent in question, if maintained, will produce injurious effects.

I also beg leave to bring prominently to the notice of this Hon'ble Council the fact that improvements, whether made by landlords or tenants, are effected with the special view of improving the productive power of land and in perfectly good faith, and that *bonâ fide* action cannot, and should not, be held to make the doer liable to compensation for any loss that may be caused thereby.

The Taluqdars' objections to the extension of the statutory privileges to pāhikāsht or non-resident tenants, carry great weight and call for the special attention of this Hon'ble Council. To promote the agricultural prosperity of the Province has been the guiding principle and the professed aim and object of the present Bill; and, as non-resident tenants are barred by local custom as well as by the terms of the Wajib-ul-arz from using water and manure for the improvement of their holdings, they should not be placed on an equal footing with resident tenants and admitted to the special privileges conferred on the latter. It cannot be said that the Taluqdars have brought forward this point at the last stage of the Bill. They have already touched upon it in their printed Memorandum (page 21) proposing changes to the Bill. So able and experienced an officer as Colonel Erskine, the Special Commissioner, the outcome of whose elaborate enquiries is the present Rent Bill, has, in paragraph 149 of his letter No. 135, dated 1st June 1883, recommended the exclusion of pāhikāsht tenants from the new statutory privileges. I have already urged in the course of these remarks strong reasons against the views expressed on this point in the letter of the Chief Secretary to the Government, North-Western Provinces and Oudh, No. $\frac{2456 \text{ R.}}{208-80}$, dated the 6th instant.

Lastly, I humbly beg to call the attention of this Hon'ble Council to Section 69, wherein the words 'by a registered document' appear to be quite unnecessary. The particular effect of this restriction will be to bar contracts between landlords and tenants for periods exceeding the statutory term of seven years, as neither will like to go a long way out of his village or estate to get any such document registered. I therefore humbly beg to suggest that registration may be made optional and not compulsory.

APPENDIX C.

Speech delivered by the HON'BLE RANA SIR SHANKAR BAKSH SINGH BAHADUR, K.C.I.E., on the Suits Valuation Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council on the 28th January 1887.

MY LORD,—With your Lordship's permission, I beg to offer a few remarks on the Bill now before your Excellency's Council.

There is nothing in the present Bill which is open to objection or which calls for criticism.

The main object of the Bill seems to be to obviate difficulties in estimating the value of the subject-matter of suits for the purpose of determining the jurisdiction of Courts with respect thereto. It not unfrequently happens that the Lower Court, under-estimating the value of the subject-matter of a suit brought before it, considers that it falls within its jurisdiction, while, on appeal, the Appellate Court holds that the Lower Court had no jurisdiction and reverses its decision, solely on this ground. The result is, that all the proceedings gone through and the evidence produced by the parties concerned, are rendered useless, and the case has to be retried by a Court of competent jurisdiction. It also happens that the plea of want of jurisdiction, although it was not put forth in the Lower Court, is urged in the Appellate Court, which, finding from the record of the case that in trying a suit the value of the subject-matter of which was too high the Lower Court had really exceeded the limits of its jurisdiction, sets aside its decision and the whole proceeding is quashed.

Sometimes the case is remanded by the Appellate Court to be retried with special reference to the value of the subject-matter,

and then finding that the suit, as regards the value of the property in dispute, was beyond the jurisdiction of the Lower Court, the Appellate Court cancels the whole proceeding and directs the case to be retried by a Court of competent jurisdiction.

These, My Lord, are the most obvious instances in which the law, as it now stands, fails to accomplish its object and to remedy such defects; legislation on the lines of the present Bill seems to be necessary.

The Bill gives Local Governments the power to make rules regarding the mode of estimating the value of the subject-matter of suits. This is necessary, because different rates prevail, not only in different Provinces but in the different parts of the one and the same Province, and because no definite provisions could be made in the Bill itself for estimating the value of the subject-matter of suits in different Provinces or Parganas for the purpose of determining the jurisdiction of Courts; more especially as the value of land is always fluctuating, which makes it all the more necessary to invest Local Governments with the power to make rules after duly considering the different local conditions and the various and constantly varying rates prevailing in different localities, and from time to time to alter or modify the rules thus made, so as to make them applicable to lands of different descriptions and capacities and to other property of which the value is always rising and falling.

The present Bill, as amended by the Select Committee, fairly promises to fulfil the object with which it has been framed and brought before this Hon'ble Council.



APPENDIX D.

Speech delivered by the HON'BLE RANA SIR SHANKAR BAKSH SINGH BAHADUR, K.C.I.E., on the Petroleum Bill in the Imperial Legislative Council on the 3rd February 1888.

I have fully considered the Petroleum Bill and the Statement of its objects and reasons. Since Petroleum (including various kinds of inflammable liquids enumerated in the Bill) is an article of trade, it does not seem to me improper to levy a custom-duty on the same on its being imported into British India from any other country or island. My reasons for the above conclusions are as follows:—

The Government has, both on land and water, afforded every convenience and safety to the public by means of railways and steamers, which facilitate commercial communications with distant countries and thereby cause the prosperity and development of commerce.

The Government, as far as possible, protects the property of every individual.

Having these reasons in view, I entirely agree with the Hon'ble Member, Mr. Westland, in his proposal to impose a duty on Petroleum; but since at the same time, it appears from the Statement of objects and reasons, that the trade of Petroleum has been on the increase for the last two years only, I beg to suggest that in the beginning, if deemed advisable, the rate of duty should be a little lower than that which has been proposed. In future, the rate may be raised if the said trade proves more flourishing, or if the present increase therein remains in after years steady.



APPENDIX E.

ENGLISHMAN, 29th January 1906.

CALCUTTA NOW AND TWENTY YEARS AGO.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "ENGLISHMAN."

SIR,

As an occasional visitor to Calcutta, who has a vivid recollection of the appearance which it presented twenty years ago, I trust, I may be permitted to bear my humble testimony to the various improvements which I have noticed during my present visit to this Metropolitan City. My first visit took place in 1887, when I accompanied my father, the late Rana Sir Shankar Baksh Singh Bahadur, K.C.I.E., who came here to attend the meetings of the Imperial Legislative Council of which he was an Additional Member. Burrabazar was then full of narrow lanes which were never properly swept, and a sickening stench pervaded the entire Native town. When I contrast what I then saw and *smelt* with my present experiences, I am fairly lost in admiration. The dingy and dirty lanes of Burrabazar have given place to the magnificent Harrison Road lined with stately edifices built on sanitary principles, and the streets and lanes are swept more satisfactorily than was the case when I first visited the city. The opening of this Road has immensely improved the sanitation of this part of the Town, though I remember, even this great improvement was not effected without some opposition from the residents. The continuous water-supply is another boon, the value of which can be adequately appreciated only by those who remember the water scarcity which prevailed in Burrabazar twenty years ago. In the course of my drives through the city, I have noticed several filthy bustees transformed into beautiful squares,

and numerous bathing platforms and public latrines provided for the poorer classes. I hope the Municipal Authorities will soon take in hand the widening of Chitpur Road which is too narrow to meet the growing requirements of a growing population. I have often seen this road blocked by long lines of carriages, to the serious inconvenience and danger of pedestrians, but, I am sure, this much-needed improvement will find a place in the Improvement Scheme of which we have heard so much. My present visit in connection with the presentation of the Taluqdars' address to the Viceroy has taught me many things, not the least noteworthy of which is the object-lesson which the improvement of Calcutta affords of the utility of Municipal Institutions.

RANA SHEW RAJ SINGH,

Taluqdar,

KHAJURGAON.

•CALCUTTA, *January 28th.*

APPENDIX F.

PIONEER, *12th February 1906.*

OUDH FIFTY YEARS AGO.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,

Tuesday, the 13th of February, will witness the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Annexation of Oudh to British Territory, which was effected by Lord Dalhousie under orders from the Home Government, by a Proclamation, dated the 13th of February 1856. Lord Dalhousie himself was not in favour of annexation but had proposed that the King of Oudh should be permitted to retain his royal title and rank but should be required to vest the whole civil and military administration of Oudh in the hands of the Company. The milder policy, recommended by the Governor-General, was, however, rejected by the Court of Directors and Her Majesty's Ministry who ordered the annexation of Oudh and desired Lord Dalhousie to see the order carried out before laying down his office. It is not my object to discuss the propriety or the morality of the annexation, which will indeed be apparent from an impartial examination of the condition of the Province and its population at the time which immediately preceded the annexation. I submit such a retrospect will be neither unseasonable nor unprofitable, now that the Province has been under British rule for exactly half a century.

I must begin with the King. The late Wazid Ali Shah was an effeminate voluptuary who passed his days and nights in the society of fiddlers and eunuchs, poetasters and dancing girls, and was entirely under their baneful influence. He had neither the capacity nor the inclination to look after the administration of his Kingdom and suffered himself to be led about by his curl-pated minions.

The gang of fiddlers, eunuchs, and poetasters was all powerful in the State, and even the Prime Minister and his lieutenants were obliged to propitiate them by systematic presents and bribes. Indeed, without their support, the Prime Minister could not retain his position for a day, and between them, they appropriated, or rather misappropriated, to themselves one-half of the revenues of the country. The fiddlers had absolute control over the administration of Civil Justice, and the eunuchs over that of Criminal Justice, so that justice was, as a rule, sold to the highest bidder. The Prime Minister had charge of the Land Revenue Department, and it is recorded that when he was on tour, his attendants "were plundering in all the surrounding villages," and the attendants on the contractors and other local officials were, if possible, still worse, and we are told that "throughout the country the King's officers all plundered, utterly regardless of the sufferings of the people and the best interests of the Sovereign." Every appointment in the State had a price attached to it, and the revenue farmers and their armed retainers oppressed the cultivators to such an extent, that vast tracts of cultivated country relapsed into jungle in consequence of their having been deserted by an over-oppressed tenantry. The strong Taluqdars often defied the King, and refused to pay him any revenue, unless coercive methods were employed, and amused themselves with attacking their weak neighbours and annexing their estates. Oppression of the cruelest kind was the order of the day, and neither life nor property was secure.

Sir William Sleeman records as follows in connection with a certain raid:—"All the towns and villages on the estate were plundered of everything that could be found, and fifteen hundred men and about two hundred women and children were brought in prisoners with no less than eighty thousand animals of all kinds. Pregnant women were beaten on by the troops

with bludgeon and the butt ends of muskets and matchlocks. Many of them gave premature birth to children and died on the road, and many children were trodden to death. At a certain place, the tenants, who had refused to sign bonds for the payment of whatever sums might be demanded of them, were tortured from daybreak till noon. They were tied up and flogged, had red hot ramrods thrust into their flesh, their tongues were pulled out with hot pincers and pierced through. No less than seventy men, besides women and children, perished from torture and starvation. It is further stated that the women and children were all stripped of their clothes, and many died from cold and want of sustenance."

We need not linger upon this gruesome picture, but we would do well to remember that this was the normal state of Oudh before the annexation. Owing to the corruption that prevailed, the public service was manned by incompetent, unscrupulous and low-born men whose one thought was to enrich themselves by abusing their powers and tyrannizing over the people. No career was open to honest, able and respectable men. The higher appointments in the army were monopolized by the nominees of Messrs. Eunuch, Fiddler & Co., and the troops, who were seldom paid their salaries with anything like regularity, eked out their livelihood by plundering helpless peasants. Infanticide prevailed as a recognized institution throughout the Province, notwithstanding the fact that it had been prohibited by the King about a quarter of a century before the annexation." Sleeman writes:—"Some families in every Rajput tribe in Oudh destroy their female infants to avoid the cost of marrying them."

Comparing the present state of Oudh with what existed fifty years ago, who can have the hardihood to gainsay that the annexation has proved to be a boon and a blessing to the people?

In the Proclamation of Annexation, Lord Dalhousie said :—
 “The British Government would be guilty in the sight of God and man, if it were any longer to aid in sustaining by its countenance an administration fraught with suffering to millions.” Now that the angry passions which the annexation had evoked have passed away, and we, who are separated from that epoch-making event by the distance of half a century, can take a calm and dispassionate retrospect of the various changes, chiefly reforms, which the annexation has brought in its train, every son of Oudh will feel grateful to the great Power which has conferred upon our long suffering Province the priceless boons of peace and security, of progress and prosperity. True, we have lost something of the martial spirit of the ‘Barons bold’ of old, whose days were spent in the wild excitement of war and plunder. But surely peace hath her victories not less glorious than war, to which it is the privilege of the present and future generations to aspire. Yet one cannot but feel a sort of sneaking admiration for those stern Knights of the pre-annexation days, whose swords are now rust but whose souls are with the saints, I trust.

RANA SHEW RAJ SINGH,

Talukdar.

KHURGAON, 7th February 1906.

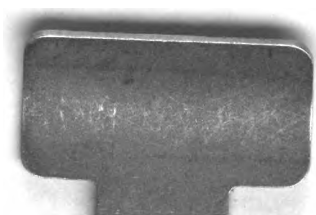


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